

THE LIFE OF  
BENJAMIN DISRAELI  
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

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VISCOUNTESS BEACONSFIELD.

*From the portrait at Hughenden, painted in 1873 by G. F. Middleton.*

THE LIFE OF  
BENJAMIN DISRAELI  
EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

BY  
GEORGE EARL BUCKLE  
IN SUCCESSION TO W. F. MONYPENNY

VOLUME V  
1868---1876  
WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

*Read no history, nothing but  
biography, for that is life without  
theory.*—CONTARINI FLEMING.

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## CONTENTS OF VOL. V.

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	ix
I. THE IRISH CHURCH. 1868 . . . . .	1
II. DEFEAT AND RESIGNATION. 1868 . . . . .	56
III. RESERVE IN OPPOSITION. 1868-1871 . . . . .	102
IV. LOTHAIR. 1869-1870 . . . . .	148
V. THE TURN OF THE TIDE. 1872-1873 . . . . .	171
VI. BEREAVEMENT. 1872-1873 . . . . .	221
VII. LADY BRADFORD AND LADY CHESTERFIELD. 1873-1875 . . . . .	237
VIII. POWER. 1874 . . . . .	271
IX. POLITICAL SUCCESS AND PHYSICAL FAILURE. 1874 . . . . .	301
X. SOCIAL REFORM. 1874-1875 . . . . .	359
XI. AN IMPERIAL FOREIGN POLICY. 1874-1875 . . . . .	406
XII. SUEZ CANAL AND ROYAL TITLE. 1875-1876 . . . . .	439
XIII. FROM THE COMMONS TO THE LORDS. 1876-1877 . . . . .	488
APPENDIX.	
AN UNFINISHED NOVEL . . . . .	531

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. V.

VISCOUNTESS BEACONSFIELD . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
From a portrait by C. F. Middleton, at Hughenden.	
GATHORNE HARDY, FIRST EARL OF CRANBROOK . . . . .	FACING PAGE 28
From a portrait by W. E. Miller, at Hughenden.	
MARY, COUNTESS OF DERBY . . . . .	124
From a portrait after J. Swinton, at Hughenden.	
"CRITICS" . . . . .	170
From the cartoon by Sir John Tenniel, in <i>Punch</i> .	
ANNE COUNTESS OF CHESTERFIELD . . . . .	238
From a portrait after Sir E. Landseer, R.A., at Hughenden.	
SELINA COUNTESS OF BRADFORD . . . . .	248
From a portrait after Sir F. Grant, P.R.A., at Hughenden.	
MR. DISRAELI AT GLASGOW UNIVERSITY, 1873 . . . . .	264
From a drawing by Mrs. Blackburn, at Hughenden.	
SIR PHILIP ROSE, FIRST BARONET . . . . .	298
From a portrait by Van Havermaet, at Hughenden.	
GROUP AT HUGHENDEN, WHITSUNTIDE, 1876 . . . . .	312
From a photograph by H. W. Taunt, Oxford.	
ROBERT, THIRD MARQUIS OF SALISBURY . . . . .	360
From a portrait at Hughenden.	
THE LIBRARY AT HUGHENDEN . . . . .	404
From a photograph.	
EDWARD HENRY, FIFTEENTH EARL OF DERBY . . . . .	412
From a photograph by the London Stereoscopic Co.	
BARON LIONEL DE ROTHSCHILD . . . . .	448
From a portrait at New Court.	





## PREFACE

### TO VOLUMES V. AND VI.

It was originally intended that the story of the last phase of Disraeli's life should be completed in one volume. This would only have been possible if his management of the Eastern Question, the most outstanding feature of his great Administration, were treated merely in general terms; a course which, however unsatisfactory in itself, appeared to be discreet and judicious, so long as Russia was our faithful ally in the war, and was governed by a friendly Sovereign, the grandson of that Emperor Alexander who was in antagonism in the later seventies to Queen Victoria and to her Minister. But the Revolution in Russia, the repudiation of the Alliance, and the murder of the Tsar have entirely changed the conditions. There can be now no reasons of international delicacy to prevent a full disclosure of Disraeli's Eastern policy; without which disclosure, indeed, the record of his life and accomplishment would be seriously imperfect. While the course of history has thus tended to promote an extension of plan, there has also been placed unexpectedly at my disposal a great mass of important new material for the final eight years, 1873 to 1881. It has, therefore, become inevitable to expand the proposed one last volume into the two volumes now submitted to the public.

During more than half the period, 1868 to 1881, covered by these volumes, Disraeli was the First Minister of the Crown; and the principal documents not hitherto accessible to the world, bearing on his public policy, must necessarily be his correspondence with Queen Victoria. His Majesty the King has graciously permitted me to make an extensive

selection from these royal papers, and thus to illustrate and elucidate in an ample manner both the policy of the Minister and his relations to his Sovereign. I am deeply sensible of the magnitude of the benefit that the book has received through His Majesty's kindness, for which I desire to tender very dutiful acknowledgments.

Only second to my obligations to the King are my indebtedness and my gratitude to those who have afforded me access to the new material mentioned above. By the courtesy of the Bridgeman family, and, in particular, of the Dowager Lady Bradford, of Commander the Hon. Richard Orlando Beaconsfield Bridgeman, R.N., Beaconsfield's godson and namesake, a gallant officer who has since given his life for his country, and of Lady Beatrice Pretyma, the present owner, I have been enabled to make copious use of the voluminous correspondence which Disraeli in his last years carried on with two sisters, Selina Lady Bradford and Anne Lady Chesterfield. The character of Disraeli's letters and of the intimacy between him and these ladies is fully explained in Volume V., chapter 7; and every subsequent chapter in both volumes bears witness to the vital importance of the contribution thus made to Disraelian biography. Attention may perhaps be drawn here to one feature of this familiar correspondence: the highest in the land are often playfully alluded to in it under fanciful names. Thus Queen Victoria appears frequently as the Faery or Fairy, Disraeli's imagination conceiving of Her Majesty as a modern Queen Elizabeth, a nineteenth-century Faery Queen, so that he could write of and to her somewhat in the same romantic fashion as Spenser or Raleigh employed in addressing and describing their magnificent Mistress.

I have to thank the Beaconsfield trustees for the continuance of their confidence and encouragement; and to lament that death has once more caused a breach in their ranks: Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, whose marriage reception in January, 1881, was among the last social functions which Beaconsfield attended, having passed away since

Volume IV. was published. There are many others to whom I owe thanks either for permission to use letters, or for more direct assistance in the preparation of these volumes. I would especially mention Lord Derby, Lord Sanderson, Lord Salisbury, Lord Iddesleigh, the Bishop of Worcester, Major Coningsby Disraeli, Mr. Norton Longman, Mr. Murray, and my wife.

It is with a sense of thankfulness and relief that I bring to a conclusion a biography, the publication of which has suffered so much through death and delay. Lord Rowton, Beaconsfield's literary executor; Nathaniel Lord Rothschild and Sir Philip Rose, the original trustees of the Beaconsfield estate; Mr. Moberly Bell, who, at the request of the trustees, undertook, on behalf of *The Times*, to arrange for the publication and to supply a biographer; and Mr. Monypenny, who projected the work and completed the first two volumes — are all dead; and further delay has been caused by illness and the war. The fact that two writers have been successively engaged upon the book has necessarily impaired its unity; though I have not consciously departed from the lines upon which Mr. Monypenny worked, save perhaps in making an even more extensive use of the wealth of Disraeli's letters at my command. Wherever possible, I have preferred to let Disraeli tell his own story, rather than to tell it for him. It is, I hope, a fair claim to make for these six volumes that, whatever their imperfections, they largely enable the reader to realise Disraeli's life from the inside, through the evidence of his familiar letters to wife, sister, and friends, as well as of his political and personal letters to his Sovereign and his colleagues.

This method of biography, of course, precludes brevity. But a large canvas is required to display with anything like justice the character and achievement of one who did so much, and who was so much; who held the attention of the world, as man, author, Parliamentarian, and statesman, for nearly sixty years, from the publication of *Vivian Grey* till the last day of his life; whose career his rival Glad-

stone pronounced to be the most remarkable, with the possible exception of the younger Pitt, in our long Parliamentary history; who, apart from his political eminence, won a definite and distinguished place in literature; and who, to adopt the apt words of a reviewer of the fourth of these volumes, was also 'one of the most original, interesting, and interested human beings who ever walked through the pageant of life.' Unlike as Disraeli was in most respects to the great Tory of a hundred years before him, Dr. Johnson, he resembled him in being a unique figure of extraordinary and, I would fain believe, perennial human interest; one of those figures about whose personality and performance the curiosity of the world remains ever active. It has been my aim, as it was Mr. Monypenny's, from the mass of papers bequeathed to Lord Rowton, and from an abundance of other original sources, to satisfy that curiosity.

G. E. B.

LONDON,

*October, 1919.*

## CHAPTER I

### THE IRISH CHURCH

1868

From February, 1868, till his death thirteen years later, Disraeli was the titular head, as he had long been the most vital force, of the Conservative party. But until after his victory at the polls in 1874 his authority was of an imperfect character, liable to question and dispute. Lord Derby lived for a year and a half after his resignation; and throughout that period many of his old followers still looked upon him as their leader, with Disraeli as acting deputy; a position which, indeed, Disraeli himself had gracefully volunteered to accept, though Derby's common sense and good feeling had repudiated the suggestion.<sup>1</sup> Derby's death, in 1869, converted Disraeli's regency over the party into actual sovereignty; but the ill-fortune which had attended the Conservatives at the General Election in November, 1868, continued to discredit the foresight and diminish the prestige of the new Chief until the bye-elections from 1871 onwards showed that the tide had turned. With success came general and unstinted confidence; and during the Administration of 1874-1880, Disraeli exercised as undisputed a sway over his followers, and as complete a control over Parliament, as ever was attained in this country by Minister or party-leader. The confidence of his party was not seriously shaken by the crushing defeat of 1880; he retained it in almost undiminished measure to the last day of his life.

The nine months of his first Administration were, how-

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. IV., p. 590.

ever, a troubled and unsatisfactory time. Not that the unfavourable turn of events was due to the deficiencies of the Cabinet, which was constituted as follows:

<i>First Lord of the Treasury</i>	..	B. DISRAELI.
<i>Lord Chancellor</i>	..	LORD CAIRNS.
<i>Lord President</i>	..	DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.
<i>Lord Privy Seal</i>	..	EARL OF MALMESBURY.
<i>Home Secretary</i>	..	GATHORNE HARDY.
<i>Foreign Secretary</i>	..	LORD STANLEY.
<i>Colonial Secretary</i>	..	DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.
<i>War Secretary</i>	..	SIR JOHN PAKINGTON.
<i>Indian Secretary</i>	..	SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE.
<i>Chancellor of the Exchequer</i>	..	G. WARD HUNT.
<i>First Lord of the Admiralty</i>	..	HENRY J. L. CORRY.
<i>President of the Board of Trade</i>	..	DUKE OF RICHMOND.
<i>First Commissioner of Works</i>	..	LORD JOHN MANNERS.
<i>Chief Secretary for Ireland</i>	..	EARL OF MAYO.

Though not so powerful as Derby's original Cabinet in July, 1866, it was still a formidable combination, containing half a dozen members who were real statesmen, and several more who were experienced and competent administrators. If it had lost Cranborne, it had gained Cairns; and its principal loss, that of Derby himself, did not affect the Chamber in which the battle was immediately to be fought, though it undoubtedly affected the ultimate tribunal, the electorate, who had regarded him with respect, though not with enthusiasm, for nearly forty years. But the most efficient Cabinet is of no avail in the face of an adverse, and united, Parliamentary majority. In Parliament Whigs, Liberals, Radicals, and Irish, taken all together, had a majority of sixty or seventy over the Conservatives; and, with the settlement of the Reform question which had divided them, they would, however sore with one another, have a disposition to reunite in order to regain office.

One aspect of the Parliamentary situation demands especial notice. As Derby had been obliged by ill-health to give way to Disraeli, so Russell, owing to his increasing years, had retired this winter in favour of Gladstone. With

the session of 1868 the protagonists of the two parties in the House of Commons stood out as the party leaders. Each admired and respected the great Parliamentary qualities of his rival; but Gladstone's respect was combined with an alloy of deep moral disapprobation — a frame of mind which was fostered by what Disraeli had called the 'finical and fastidious crew' of High Anglicans among whom Gladstone familiarly moved. To them and to him Disraeli's elevation was an offence. A brilliant journalist shrewdly diagnosed the Gladstonian temper of the moment:

One of the most grievous and constant puzzles of King David was the prosperity of the wicked and the scornful, and the same tremendous moral enigma has come down to our own days. . . . Like the Psalmist, the Liberal leader may well protest that verily he has cleansed his heart in vain and washed his hands in innocency; all day long he has been plagued by Whig Lords and chastened every morning by Radical manufacturers; as blamelessly as any curate he has written about *Ecce Homo*; and he has never made a speech, even in the smallest country town, without calling out with David, How foolish am I, and how ignorant! For all this, what does he see? The scorner who shot out the lip and shook the head at him across the table of the House of Commons last session has now more than heart could wish; his eyes, speaking in an Oriental manner, stand out with fatness, he speaketh loftily, and pride compasseth him about as a chain. . . . That the writer of frivolous stories about *Vivian Grey* and *Coningsby* should grasp the sceptre before the writer of beautiful and serious things about *Ecce Homo* — the man who is epigrammatic, flashy, arrogant, before the man who never perpetrated an epigram in his life, is always fervid, and would as soon die as admit that he had a shade more brain than his footman — the Radical corrupted into a Tory before the Tory purified and elevated into a Radical — is not this enough to make an honest man rend his mantle and shave his head and sit down among the ashes inconsolable? <sup>1</sup>

But inaction in face of such a moral paradox would have been wholly out of keeping with Gladstone's vigorous character. His 'teeth were set on edge,' as Gathorne Hardy

<sup>1</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 3, 1868.



wrote, 'and he prepared to bite.'<sup>1</sup> It might be thought that the last session of an expiring Parliament — a session which must be devoted mainly to the corollaries of Reform and necessary administrative work — would afford him little opportunity. There was, however, a weapon to his hand, but it was one which he had hitherto hesitated to grasp, and which completely would its employment mark his severance from the most cherished of the ideas with which he entered public life. On the other side, nothing could recommend him so strongly to the party which he had now finally adopted as to brandish the sword of religious equality, even if only in Ireland. Gladstone's Church views had been the chief great stumblingblock to complete sympathy with his new party; and hitherto he had declined to associate himself with that attack on the Irish Establishment which had united Whigs (when in opposition), Radicals, and the Irish brigades ever since the days of Russell's motion in 1835 about the Appropriation Clause. He had, indeed, he has told us, regarded the position of the Irish Church as indefensible since 1863; but both in 1865 and in 1866 he had, as Mr. Disraeli, Minister, resisted motions against it, and when he was seeking re-election at Oxford in 1865 had informed a clerical vote that he regarded the question as 'remote and apparently out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day.' At that time, so far as public declarations went, it seemed even more unlikely that Gladstone would effect Irish disestablishment than that Disraeli would carry household suffrage.

But the Fenian conspiracy had forcibly directed public attention to the defects of British government in Ireland, and the leaders of both parties were preoccupied with Irish policy. The object at which both aimed was the reconciliation with England of the leaders of Roman Catholic opinion in Ireland. With Roman Catholic opinion in England

<sup>1</sup> Gathorne Hardy's *Life of Lord Cranbrook*, Vol I., p. 284. Hardy's diaries are most valuable evidence as regards the proceedings of Disraeli's two Governments; and the following pages will show how great are my obligations to the admirable biography of the father by the son.

Disraeli had established a *modus vivendi* during Palmerston's Government, though, owing to an indiscretion of Derby's, its effect had been impaired at the last General Election. In regard to Ireland he had advocated conciliation, but conciliation through the action of a powerful and vigorous executive, from his early days in Parliament. In a famous speech <sup>1</sup> in 1844 he had said that it was the duty of an English Minister to effect in Ireland by policy all those changes which a revolution would effect by force; in 1847 he had urged the liberal outlay of English gold to forward Irish economic development; in the first Derby-Disraeli Government he had endeavoured to pass into law a comprehensive reform of Irish land tenure in favour of the tenant; and in the second Derby-Disraeli Government he had contemplated the grant of a charter to a Roman Catholic University in Dublin, but had lacked the time to carry the policy into act. It was this last scheme which he took up once more in the years 1867 and 1868, being much encouraged by Manning, who had recently become Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, and who was eager to assume the lead in all movements for the benefit of his adopted co-religionists. From May, 1867, to March, 1868, Disraeli was in regular communication with the Archbishop, who represented himself as fully acquainted with the views of Cardinal Cullen and the other leaders of Irish Roman Catholic opinion. After an informal conversation on an early Sunday in May, Manning brought the Rector of the existing Roman Catholic University in Dublin to see Disraeli. In a letter arranging for the interview Manning wrote, on May 21: 'I am able to say, of my own knowledge, that any favourable proposal from Government on the subject of the Catholic University would not only encounter no opposition, but would be assisted. I believe I may say that this includes the granting of a charter. What I write is not from second-hand. I can add that the "Chief" I conferred with is in the front, and he fully

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. II., pp. 188-194.

recognises the need of removing the Catholic education of Ireland from the turbulent region of politics.' He urged Disraeli to disregard certain expressions of Irish members of Parliament, hostile to chartering a Catholic University. 'I am now able to state,' he wrote on August 20, 'that they do not represent the sense and desire of Cardinal Cullen or of the Irish Bishops.' He warned Disraeli of the importance of securing the co-operation of the Irish Bishops.

In the winter months the conversations were resumed. On December 22 Manning wrote that he had just received a letter from Cardinal Cullen 'on the subject of our last conversation,' and requested a further appointment, which apparently took effect on December 28. On January 15, 1868, he suggested another talk, stating in his letter that he had been reading 'with great assent' Disraeli's speech on Irish affairs in 1844. Again, on February 19, he accepted an appointment for the following day. This was just after the reopening of Parliament, when the grave news of Derby's relapse was turning all eyes upon his Chancellor of the Exchequer. 'I fully understood your silence,' Manning wrote, 'knowing how much and anxiously you must be pressed. The present moment is truly a crisis, but I trust that all may issue in good.' Throughout these weeks Manning was lending his assistance in maturing the Ministerial plan, and he hailed Disraeli's elevation to the Premiership in terms which showed not obscurely that he was looking forward to co-operation with him in a policy of Roman Catholic amelioration — a policy which involved, besides University education, a reform of the Irish land laws, and an ultimate vision of concurrent endowment in Ireland for the Roman Church.

*From Archbishop Manning.*

8, YORK PLACE, Feb. 26, 1868.— The kindness and consideration I have received from you impels me to convey to you my sympathy at this great crisis of your public life.

It is my privilege to stand neutral between political parties, and I have been united, for nearly forty years, in close personal friend-

ship with Mr. Gladstone; nevertheless it is a happiness to me to see you where your public services have justly placed you as first Minister of the Crown, and to add an expression of my best wishes. I trust you may have health and life to carry out the legislation which, as you one day told me, you thought yourself too old to see realised. That is not so; and the season has set in sooner than you then looked for.

This letter needs no reply, but I could not let the moment pass without assuring you of my sympathy.

There was undoubtedly a certain disposition to look to Disraeli — a statesman who had always regarded Ireland in a spirit alike of detachment and of sympathy — for a settlement of the Irish question. Early in the session of 1866 Bright had adjured both leaders, Gladstone and Disraeli, to lay aside their Parliamentary rivalry and combine with this object; and Bernal Osborne, shortly after the formation of the 1866 Government, had recalled the speech of 1844 and urged that now was the moment for Disraeli to put in force the policy then proclaimed. The successful settlement of the Reform difficulty by the method of taking the House as a whole into council suggested that the same man and the same method might solve the still more intractable problem of Ireland. A voice reached Disraeli in that sense from Australia. Gavan Duffy wrote from Melbourne on November 26, 1867, congratulating him on his success in his Herculean task of Reform, and urging that there was a 'crowning work' for him still to do. 'You could give Ireland peace, and, after a little, prosperity.' It was too late for half-measures.

A statesman must offer the agricultural classes terms which a reasonable man may regard as fairly competing with the terms upon which he can obtain land if he emigrates to America or Australia. . . . If the State will buy up at a reasonable valuation the waste lands now unproductive, and let them at a rent yielding 3 per cent. on the purchase money, and will further enable the more intelligent and industrious Irish tenants on ordinary estates to purchase the fee simple of their farms by a series of annual payments representing the actual value, you will have tran-

quillised Ireland for this generation. The Church question and the education question will remain to be dealt with, no doubt; but these are the questions of the educated minority; the uneasy classes *are* uneasy because of the perpetual uncertainty of tenure.

Subsequent history has shown that Gavan Duffy was right; that — putting the national question aside — the tenure of land was the crux of the Irish problem, and could only be solved by an extensive system of purchases. But the 'educated minority' of Roman Catholics in Ireland were more vocal than the farmers and peasants; accordingly it was the Church question and the education question which were taken in hand at this time by leaders and parties in Parliament, the one by Gladstone and the other by Disraeli; though Disraeli had recognised in the past, and Gladstone, as his Irish researches proceeded, was to discover in the future, the supreme importance of a satisfactory settlement of the land question.

The idea of Disraeli and the Government was to establish in Dublin an institution which should stand in relation to the Roman Catholics somewhat in the same position that Trinity College does to Protestants. The governing body should entirely consist of Roman Catholics; and the teaching be mainly conducted by them; but full security should be taken that no religious influence should be brought to bear on students who belonged to another faith. Five prelates, together with the President of Maynooth, were to be put on the governing body, the senate; but there was to be a strong lay element in its constitution, and the Government contemplated the appointment of a layman as the first Chancellor. The State would pay the establishment charges of the new University, but the general question of State endowment would be postponed. This scheme, in general terms, had Manning's approval; and, from his assurances, Disraeli had reason to hope that it would be accepted in substance by the Irish Bishops. Accordingly, after its promulgation on March 10 by Mayo in the House of Com-

mons — where, though scoffed at by Bright as a pill good against the earthquake, it was received with benignity both by Chichester Fortescue on behalf of the official Liberals and by Monsell on behalf of the Roman Catholic laity — it was submitted to Archbishop Leahy and Bishop Derry, the appointed representatives of the hierarchy. Unfortunately, their attitude was widely different from what the Government had been led to expect. They demanded the submission of the new University to episcopal guidance. The Chancellor, they claimed, must always be a prelate, and Cardinal Cullen ought to be the first Chancellor. General control must not rest with the senate as a whole, a preponderatingly lay body, but with its episcopal members. These prelates must have an absolute veto on the books included in the University programme, and on the first nomination of the professors, lecturers, and other officers; and must also have the power of depriving such teachers of their offices, should they be judged by their Bishops to have done anything contrary to faith and morals.

Claims of this kind were so preposterous that the whole scheme had to be relinquished. Dr. Leahy and Dr. Derry were not men of affairs, and it has been suggested — and may well be true — that they asked for twice as much as they were prepared to take, and were astonished when the Government abandoned the negotiation as hopeless. But it is difficult not to connect the extremist attitude of the Irish negotiators with the development of Gladstone's policy of disestablishment. The preliminary reply of the Bishops was dated March 19, three days after Gladstone's announcement that the Irish Church, 'as a State Church, must cease to exist.' The final reply, expressing the episcopal views in detail, was dated March 31, after Gladstone had tabled his famous Resolutions, and while the debate on them in the House of Commons was in progress. Until Gladstone's announcement Manning was still active on behalf of the scheme; but his last letter to Disraeli was dated on the very

day (March 16) when the announcement was made. From that moment he ceased all communication with the Prime Minister till the close of the Government in December, when he excused himself as follows:

*From Archbishop Manning.*

8, YORK PLACE, W., Dec. 2, 1868.—. . . I have felt that a ravine, I will not say a gulf, opened between us when the Resolutions on the Irish Church were laid upon the Table of the House. I regretted this, as I had hoped to see the scheme of the Catholic University happily matured; but with my inevitable conviction as to the Irish Church I felt that I ought not to trespass upon your kindness, which I can assure you I shall remember with much pleasure. . . .

It is not unnatural that Disraeli should have felt that he had been treated shabbily by the representatives of the Roman Catholics, and especially by Manning. He said on more than one occasion to Roman Catholic friends that he had been stabbed in the back. Manning's defence, when he heard the accusation, was that the University negotiations 'were entirely taken out of my hands by the Bishops who corresponded with you, and in a sense at variance with my judgment and advice.' Had he been left free to act, he maintained that he would have been successful; and he averred that he had never ceased to regret the failure of his efforts.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the degree of Manning's responsibility, the facts and dates suggest that the Roman Catholic authorities were diverted from adhesion to Disraeli's programme by Gladstone's superior bid. It was impossible to resist the temptation of wreaking vengeance on the Anglican Church, though in the result they got nothing of the Church revenues, nor even, till after forty years, the Catholic University which was within their grasp; and the temporal power of the Pope, the importance of which to Roman Catho-

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Manning to Disraeli, dated Rome, May 7, 1870. Manning cited, as a witness to the accuracy of his account, Cashel Hoey, a well-known Irish journalist.

lies Disraeli alone among British statesmen appreciated, perished a couple of years later, in 1870.

Gladstone allowed the new Government no close time, but, like a capable general, took the offensive at once. Derby's resignation and Disraeli's appointment as his successor were announced in both Houses on Tuesday, February 25; on Thursday, March 5, after nine days' adjournment, Disraeli and his colleagues presented themselves to Parliament and made their Ministerial profession of faith; only five days later, on Tuesday, March 10, came a debate on the Irish question initiated by an Irish member, and the Chief Secretary's exposition of policy; and on the last night of that debate, Monday, March 16, less than three weeks after Disraeli's acceptance of office, Gladstone launched the new policy of the Liberal party, the immediate disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church. It was Gladstone's most brilliant and successful stroke as a party leader. The settlement of the Reform question by Disraeli's statesmanship had deprived the Liberals of the popular cry which they had for long utilised at elections, if they forgot it in Parliament. If no new cry were raised, there was a fear lest the working man might be disposed to vote, not for those who had often promised but failed to perform, but for those who had actually given him the franchise. The Irish Church was in a very weak position, and could not long be left untouched; it was, at this very time, undergoing investigation by a Commission which the Government had appointed in the previous year. It claimed, indeed, to be, like the Church of England, the historical representative of the ancient Church of the country; and its maintenance, as an establishment united to its sister Church, was one of the provisions by which the assent of the then dominant Protestants in Ireland was secured for the Act of Union. But, though it was the Church of the ruling classes, it had failed to win the affections of the people. More than three-quarters of the total population were Roman Catholics, and of the remainder nearly a half were Presbyterians. The



Church of Ireland ministered to only about one-eighth of the people of Ireland. Moreover, it was Evangelical in its tendencies, and had been very little affected by the Tractarian development. Here was an institution the attack upon which would rally to the Liberal banner Roman Catholics, Liberal Anglicans, Dissenters and Secularists, Whigs jealous of ecclesiastical power, and Radicals hostile to corporate property. Besides, a policy of disestablishment and disendowment gave a great opportunity for specious electioneering cries calculated to attract the new voter: 'religious equality,' 'justice to Ireland.'

How were the Government, how were the Conservative party, to meet it? The Prime Minister, nearly a quarter of a century before, had declared that an 'alien Church' was one of Ireland's legitimate grievances. He had refused to respond to Derby's urgent requests that he should speak on its behalf in Parliament, and had written to him shortly after the General Election: 'I do not think that any general resolution respecting the Irish Church could be successfully withstood in the present Parliament. It is a very unpopular cause, even with many of our best men.' On the other hand, the party which Disraeli led was essentially the defender of the Church of England, and had been especially mobilised by himself in its defence. Moreover, any loosening of the bond between religion and the State was repugnant to all his theocratic ideas. One section of the Cabinet, headed by Hardy, and powerfully supported by Derby from without, desired that high ground should be taken and the proposal denounced as sacrilegious; or, if unity could not be preserved on those lines, at least that a strong passive resistance should be offered to change. Another section, in which Stanley and Pakington were conspicuous, was ready to accept disestablishment as inevitable and desired to concentrate on liberal treatment of the disestablished Church together with a utilisation of surplus revenues for the benefit of Roman Catholics.

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. IV., pp. 405, 406, 425, 426.

*From Lord Derby.*

*Confidential.* KNOWSLEY, *March 3, 1868.*—Anxious as I am for the permanence of your Government, I cannot refrain from expressing my apprehensions as to the forthcoming discussions upon the Irish questions. . . .

Your real difficulty will arise when you come to deal with the Established Church. You know that I have always entertained a very strong opinion adverse to the right of Parliament to alienate any part of the property of that or of any other corporation, and this was the main ground of our successful opposition to the Appropriation Clause, the object of which was to convert to secular purposes any surplus, over and above what might be deemed requisite for the maintenance of the establishment. It seems to be generally assumed that this principle is no longer tenable; but the moment you depart from it, you will find yourself involved in inextricable difficulty. The obvious course would appear to be, at all events, to wait for the report of the Commission which we issued last year; but Stanley says, though I do not agree with him, that Parliament will not, and Gladstone says that it shall not, admit that ground for postponement of legislation. In my opinion, however, the safest course for the Government will be to abstain from making any proposition whatever. . . . The difficulties of this question are such that I am convinced your safety is to sit still, and, instead of showing your hand, to compel your adversaries to exhibit theirs, with all their discrepancies and contradictions. . . .

*To Lord Derby.*

10, DOWNING STREET, *March 4, 1868.*— . . We have discussed our Irish policy for two days, and have arrived at conclusions which are very much in unison with your suggestions—to bring in a Land Bill, which will deal with all those points of the controversy on which there begins to be a concurrence of opinion; and with respect to the others, to propose another Devon Commission.

The famine and State emigration have happened since the labors of that inquiry, and we think that such a body of evidence will be collected as to the present improved state of the country that a great effect may be produced on public opinion.

The Cabinet adopted unanimously the University scheme which you had approved.

With regard to the great difficulty and the real danger, the Church, although there was great difference of opinion in the Cabinet on the merits of the question, there was unanimity that it